

Rev. A. Norton

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PROSPECTUS OF THE SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETER.

NEW SERIES.

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The present number commences a new volume of this Periodical. The purpose of the work and the character of its contents will be the same as heretofore. There will be no connexion with this and the preceding volumes except that the Translations and Expositions will be continued in regular order.

The object of this Publication will be to afford to Sunday School Teachers and Parents, and also to other Christians, facilities towards a right understanding and use of the Bible, and particularly of the New Testament. It will contain translations of different passages and of whole books of the New Testament, with expositions and such critical and practical remarks as may be thought useful. It will also offer to the reader short essays on the nature of the scriptural writings, their literary character, critical peculiarities, historical, biographical, and ecclesiastical uses and value. The work is not designed to be controversial nor deeply critical. Notices of valuable books upon biblical literature, and translations and extracts from the works of eminent writers will occasionally form a part of the contents.

It will continue to be edited by some of the members of the Theological School in Cambridge, assisted by the contributions of several distinguished clergymen. Every exertion will be used to secure an interest to the work, and likewise to provide for its regular and punctual publication.

A large addition to the subscription list is still necessary to defray the cost of the publication, and it is hoped that those who approve of the plan will lend their assistance. Clergymen and others are respectfully requested to endeavor as far as their convenience will permit to increase its circulation.

CONDITIONS.

The Scriptural Interpreter will be published on the 15th of every month.

II. Each number will contain 48 pages 12mo., handsomely printed on good paper and type, making two volumes a year of 288 pages each.

III. Price two dollars per annum, to be paid in advance.

IV. Any persons procuring five subscribers shall be entitled to a sixth copy gratis.

TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION.

MATTHEW XXII. 1—22.

Parable of the Supper.

1 Then Jesus answered and spake to them again
2 in parables, saying, The kingdom of Heaven is
3 like a man that was a king who made a marriage
4 for his son, and he sent out his servants to call in
those who were invited to the marriage, and they
4 would not come. Again he sent other servants, say-
ing, Tell those who are invited, Behold I have pre-
pared my supper; my fatted beasts are killed, and
all things are ready, come ye to the marriage.
5 But they refused, and went away, one to his farm,
6 and the other to his merchandise, and the rest seiz-
ed his servants, and treated them shamefully and
7 killed them. When the king heard of it, he was
angry, and sent his soldiers and destroyed those
8 murderers, and burned up their city. Then he
says unto his servants, The wedding is ready, but
9 they who were invited were not worthy. Go you out
therefore into the corners of the streets, and whom-
10 soever you shall find invite to the wedding. And
the servants went out into the streets and collected
together as many as they found, bad and good, and
the wedding was furnished with guests.

11 But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man not clothed in a wedding garment.

12 And he says to him, Friend, how camest thou here not wearing a wedding garment? And he was silent.

13 Then the king said unto the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him up, and cast him out into the darkness without. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, for many are called, but few chosen.

15 Then the Pharisees went and took counsel that 16 they might entangle him in argument. And they sent unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and givest thyself concern for no one, for thou dost not regard the 17 face of men. Tell us therefore what thou thinkest— 18 is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not? And

Jesus knowing their wickedness said, Why tempt ye 19 me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money.

20 And they brought him a *denarius*. And he says to them, Whose is this image and the superscription?

21 They say to him, Cæsar's. Then he says to them, Render then unto Cæsar what is Cæsar's, and unto 22 God what is God's. And when they heard that they were astonished, and they left him and went away.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND PRACTICAL REMARKS.

A parable closely similar to this is related by Luke, chap. xiv. 16—24. The two resemble one another so much that they have been sometimes mistaken for different accounts of the same parable, but they appear to differ in several important particulars. One of the company who sat at meat with Christ had said, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God; which gave occasion for the parable. The objects of the two parables are also different. The groundwork however is the same in both.

When the rulers of the synagogue had departed, Jesus proposed to them the following parable, the object of which was to show that the kingdom of heaven, the happiness of submission to the mild and peaceful principles of the gospel, was offered to the chief men of the Jews, these Rabbies, and their Priests. But they, on account of their obstinate adherence to ancient prejudices, not only rejected the offered blessings, but abused God's messenger who had brought them the glad tidings. Because they have rejected so great salvation, they are to suffer painful and serious consequences. The government of the country is to be taken from them, and their city is to be destroyed. Since the Jews would not accept the gracious invitations of the Gospel they were excluded from its privileges, and its blessings were bestowed upon men of other nations. But such of them as were unfit to receive them were left in their own darkness. These seem the topics which the parable was intended to illustrate.

V. 2. *The kingdom of heaven &c.* The above phrase means in this place the tenor of God's providence towards those who were invited to the Christian religion and its benefits. God is the king.

A man that was a king, means merely a king.

A marriage for his son. Here marriage is put for *marriage-feast*, or simply for a feast. Rosenmueller says that a marriage-feast is not intended in this place, but a feast of inauguration, for according to the custom of the East, kings are called husbands of the people. God then is compared to a king, who makes his Son the sharer of his throne, and

prepares a feast on the day of inauguration for the chiefs of his people.

V. 4. *Again he sent other servants.* Some think it was the custom in ancient times among the Orientals to send twice to the expected guests, once to request them to be in readiness for the feast whenever it should take place, and again, just before the time of the feast, but this seems scarcely supported by proper authorities. A second invitation is mentioned to show that the Jews had abundant opportunity to amend their decision against the invitations of mercy if they saw fit.

A remark of one of the Rabbins may serve to illustrate this subject. Rabbi Eliezer said, Return and repent one day before thy death. His disciples asked him, why? How can a man know when he is going to die, that he may repent the day before his death? To this he replied, Since a man does not know on what day he shall die, it is the more incumbent upon him to repent today, lest he should die tomorrow and so die without repentance.

Rabbi John the son of Zaccheus, has a parable somewhat similar to this of our Savior. 'This, says he, is like a man who invited his servants to a feast but did not mention the time. The wisest of those who were invited adorned themselves, and went and stood before the king's gate, saying, Every thing has been got ready, and the king did not mention the time of the feast, so that we might come the sooner. But the foolish went each one about his own business, saying to themselves, Was there ever a feast which was prepared without much labor and a good deal of delay? There is time enough, for it will require much labor to prepare the feast. So we have a plenty of time to prepare ourselves. But on a sudden the king called for his servants; the wise who were completely prepared went in immediately, and the foolish went in before him clothed in their old and dirty garments; wherefore the king was pleased with the wise, but was angry with the foolish, and said, Those who were prepared for the feast may sit down, and eat and drink, and they who were not ready may stand and look on, for thus saith the Lord, Behold my servants shall eat, but ye shall be

hungry: behold my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: and behold my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed.'

Probably Christ upon this as well as upon other occasions made use of a well known parable.

V. 6. *And the rest seized his servants.* This may be understood to refer to the apostles, and to Jesus himself.

V. 8. *They who were invited were not worthy*, i. e., the Jews to whom the gospel was first preached.

V. 11. *He saw there a man not clothed with a wedding garment.* There might appear some injustice in expelling a man from the feast because he was not properly arrayed, when he had been summoned so hastily, but the kings and princes of the East were accustomed on such occasions to furnish their guests with splendid garments; if they rejected them they offended the giver, since they were supposed to despise a man whose presents they refused. 'In the East,' says Jahn, 'at the present day it is expected that every one who has received a garment from the king, will immediately clothe himself in it, and promptly present himself, and render his homage to the giver; otherwise he runs the hazard of exciting the king's displeasure.'

The same custom of bestowing garments upon guests prevailed among the ancient Greeks. Homer tells us that,

—'A bright damsel train attends the guests,
With liquid odors and embroidered vests!' Od. 4. 58, 59.

V. 14. *Cast him out into the darkness without*, i. e., Take him away from the hall of feasting, and cast him out into the open air. The feasts of the Orientals are celebrated in the night, in halls brightly lit. The darkness without evidently means the darkness on the outside of the house, the darkness of night. There would be *weeping and gnashing of teeth*, for the guest thus expelled would lament for the pleasure he had lost, and would rage at the indignity he had received. But the *application* of these words is a solemn one: Such as are not fit for the kingdom of heaven shall be thrust out. Many shall come from the East and the West, but for the unworthy—there is no room! *for many are*

called but few chosen. All men are *called* to receive Christianity, i. e. it is within the reach of all. All men can become virtuous and religious, but all do not. ‘There are many called ones, but few *choice* ones.’

V. 15. *Then the Pharisees, &c.* i. e., the emissaries of the Pharisees, when they found they availed nothing by open attacks, had recourse to secret stratagems. They had attempted to ensnare him by asking ‘by what authority he did those things,’ now they resort to captious questions.

V. 16. *With the Herodians,* with the friends and partizans of Herod, the followers of his court. It is probable some of them were dependent upon the Roman court. (See *Wolfii Curae Philologicae*.)

We know that thou art true, i. e., We know that thou art a lover of truth, and teachest the way by which men may attain unto God; that thou givest precepts for life which are pleasing to God.

For thou dost not regard the face of men. The sum of this passage is, Thou dost not so regard the condition of any man, as to swerve from the path of truth and justice on his account; thou dost not judge unjustly either to avert his anger, or to gain his favor.

V. 17. *Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar?* i. e., Is it consistent with our law? See Exod. xxx. 12. The law of Moses prescribed what a man should pay for the use of the temple, viz, half a shekel, which does not seem to have been intended for a perpetual tax. When Pompey conquered Syria, and subjected Palestine, he caused the regular tax to be paid to the Romans, instead of to the Priests. This tax, which was about fifteen pence sterling and exacted annually for every adult male, was exceedingly odious to the Jews.

The question which those artful men proposed to Christ was exceedingly difficult to answer; if he said the tax ought not to be paid, he would offend the Herodians and afford them an opportunity for accusing him of insubordination, and of ‘stirring up the people.’ If, on the other hand he said the tax should be paid he would offend the people who had now begun to acknowledge him as the Messiah, and who hated the tax; he might have displeased even Herod

himself, who would gladly have shaken off this burden if it had been possible. Compare Luke xx. 20 and xxiii. 2, with this passage.

The answer of Christ is full of wisdom. He calls for the coin which was to be paid, and sees the head of the Roman Emperor and his titles upon it, and draws a conclusion from their own premises. They acknowledged the coin to be Cæsar's, and the fact of its circulation among them proved their submission to the Romans; they are then to pay the tax their governors demand. They are to render to Cæsar what is his; they are to pay the tax he demands, but they are to render unto God what is his due. What this is we are not at a loss to discern: what is due to God is a life spent in his service.

THEO. PARKER.

THE LAWS OF MOSES.

(Continued.)

CHAP. III. MILITARY LAW.

It is commonly supposed the war-laws of the Hebrews were the most barbarous ever devised. So common an error may easily be corrected by comparing the practice of other nations in this regard, with that of the Jews. The nations in the vicinity of Judea exercised the most frightful cruelties upon their enemies in war.* To slay women and infants at the breast, and throw their bodies in a heap, was so common as to require an express word to denote the action. Captives were

* 2 Kings viii. 12, iii. 27. Amos i. 13.

not only put to death, but by means of the most cruel tortures. Such refinements in cruelty are unknown to our age, though they were not to our ancestors. The Romans and Greeks are sometimes represented as very humane in their treatment of captives. But the reader of Livy knows that captives were butchered in cold blood after the day of triumph, and the princes, and generals were cruelly scourged and then slain. No one will soon forget the *tender mercies* of Alexander to two thousand noble Tyrian patriots ! We find a more noble and generous code, in the legislation of Moses: barbarous indeed, yet still far in advance of the age.

1. *The military force of the Hebrews.*

Moses seems to have adopted the rule that every citizen must be a soldier, which was necessary in that peculiar position. Every man between twenty and sixty years of age, was 'liable to do military duty.'* The whole body of the militia, however, never took the field at the same time during the administration of Moses. Joshua *chose out* such as were to fight the Amalekites, and only twelve thousand went to attack the men of Midian.† Two instances only are mentioned in which all the militia were called to the field.‡ The *Shoterim*, previously mentioned, made the selection of soldiers,|| and nominated the officers.

2. *Exemption from military service.*

Moses exempted some from serving as soldiers. Any one who had built a house and had not yet occupied

* Numb. i. 3—46. xxvi. 2.

† Exod. xvii. 9, 10. Numb. xxxi. 1—6, xxxii. 17—32.

‡ Judges xx. 1 Sam. xi.

|| Deut. xx. 5—9. Compare Lev. xxvii. 32.

it, or had planted a vineyard, or made any other plantation, and had not eaten of it,* every affianced man, and every newly married man could retire from the army, without reproach. Every man, too, who was 'fearful and faint-hearted,' had the right of exemption. The above exceptions were as merciful as they were politic.†

3. *Police of the camp.*

When the soldiers assembled at the place of encampment, the priest was to go forth and make an address to the soldiers. They were exhorted not to be 'faint-hearted,' but to confide in the power of the Almighty, who was with them to fight their battles.‡ This duty was enjoined upon the priest before every engagement. The Lord was supposed to help the Israelites; so he is represented as walking in the camps; and for this reason the camp was considered a holy place, and the command was given, 'When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing.' No one who was unclean was permitted to enter it. An unclean man could go to the field of battle,—which was an unclean place—but he was excluded from the camp.|| This law must have tended strongly to repress all those irregularities which defile armies, and to preserve an orderly and suitable demeanor among the soldiers. Great care also was taken to ensure the cleanliness and health of the

* The fruit of a tree or vine could not be used before the fifth year from the planting.

† Deut. xx. 5—8.

‡ Deut. xx. 1—4.

|| Deut. xxiii. 9—15.

camp. It is probable the soldiers were divided into regiments of a thousand men, companies of a hundred and sections of ten men each. The commanders of the two first divisions had a seat in the military council. Besides these officers, there were the *Shoterim*, who kept the rolls, and a sort of Engineer, the *counter of the towers*.

4. *The spoils.*

Soldiers who were paid by the state were not common in that age. Patriotism or the hope of booty brought men into the field. It has already been mentioned that part of the king's revenue was derived from the spoils, and that women and children composed a part of it. The kings who attacked the *cities of the Plain* in Abraham's time, came only for the sake of booty, as it appears from the narration.* Moses however does not leave the enraged soldier to take booty as he pleases, and appropriate it to himself. He introduced some wise limitations to this power.

The captives and the cattle did not belong to the individual who seized them; they were divided into two equal portions, one of which was equally distributed among the soldiers, after one five hundredth part had been deducted for the Levites. The other half belonged to the whole nation, and was divided among the citizens, after one fiftieth had been deducted for the Levites. The Levites thus received but a small portion of the spoils, no more than eleven five hundredths being allotted them.†

All articles of plunder except cattle and human be-

* Gen. xiv.

† Numb. xxxi.

ings belonged to the captor. Thus gold and silver, garments and costly furniture fell into the hands of the common soldier. To recur again to the principal source of our information upon this subject, we find this custom acknowledged, for the common soldiers retained their booty while the officers consecrated their share to the use of the sanctuary.* In this instance the officers alone received sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels of gold, about sixty-seven thousand dollars.

This law respecting the division of captives and animals among the whole people seems soon to have fallen into disuse, for we find David adopting another method of distribution,† for he took a large portion of the spoil to himself, and sent presents from it to the elders of Israel, but not to the whole people.

After a battle, and probably before the division of the spoil, the dead bodies of the enemy were respectfully laid down in the neighboring valleys, and those of their countrymen were, if possible, brought back to the graves of their fathers. To be deprived of burial was looked upon as a terrible punishment. They erected no splendid trophy upon the field of victory; a simple stone marked the spot where the children of Israel fell while fighting for their country or their laws.‡

Before the soldiers returned to their homes they were to spend a week in purifying themselves from the

* Numb. xxxi. 48—54.

† 1 Sam. xxx. 20—31.

‡ Salvador. vol. iii. p. 247.

defilements of war; they then returned to their firesides. Probably they entered the cities in a triumphal procession, after a victorious campaign, and were met by processions of females. This seems to have been done when Saul and David returned from victory.*

Michaelis thinks the Hebrews were not commanded to make a declaration of war before commencing hostilities. If it may be allowed to differ from this great scholar, there seems to be such a law expressly declared in Deut. xx. 10, 11, and there are many instances of the observance of a sort of declaration or challenge. The King of Judah sent a message to the king of Israel, saying, 'Come let us look one another in the face.'† This was a declaration of war.‡

When a city was to be attacked, Moses gave command that it should be invited to make terms of peace, and if the city consented, then life, property and public order were all respected, no one lifted a hand against the enemy; they were enemies no more, they became tributaries of the Hebrews.|| If, on the other hand, the enemy refused to consent to peace, then were the Israelites to proceed to lay siege to it. It is usual in war to lay waste the country of the enemy, to burn the standing corn, to sweep down plantations, villages, cities; to carry fire and sword to the living and the inanimate. The law of Moses was more humane in this particular.

* 1 Kings xviii. 7. Compare also Judges v. 28.

† 2 Kings xiv. 8—10.

‡ See other instances of similar proceedings, Judges xi. 12. xv. 10. 1 Kings xx. 1—3.

|| Deut. xx. 10, 11.

No fruit tree was allowed to be injured. 'Is the tree of the field a man,' says Moses, 'that he may come and attack thee?*' Beside, say the Talmudists, a city was not to be blockaded closely, but permission to depart was given to all that desired it. Supplies of water were never to be diverted from the beleaguered city, much less was it permitted to poison the springs and aqueducts.†

During the three great festivals, and the sabbatical year, hostilities were not to be carried on. Battle however was not forbidden on the sabbath, though the later Jews once understood it to be so. But of this more will be said when the sabbath is treated of.

Some of Moses' war-laws were undoubtedly severe, but less so than those of all the nations around him. Nay the old Greeks and Romans, much as their clemency has been extolled, were more cruel than Moses. The laws relating to the Canaanites were apparently cruel. But consider the peculiar circumstances of the Jews' position at the time, and their destruction seems almost necessary. The Jews were wanderers, without a home, fleeing from the iron bondage of Egypt to the homes of their fathers. Their Lawgiver teaches them the worship of the one true God; the surrounding nations with their lascivious idolatry will seduce them from the truth. They have already led them astray and molested their march; was it not then in self-defence that some of the Canaanitish nations were rooted out? Are we to attribute their extirpation to the

* Deut. xx. 19. Rosenmueller *in loco*.

† Salvador vol. iii. p. 241.

will of the nation, or to the command of God? The latter is the common opinion. But all the force of the language is perhaps met if we suppose the council merely human. An ancient Jew would have said the Lord commanded our own ancestors to destroy the Indians.* War is averse to the spirit of the institutions of Moses. 'Pure Theism,' says a great man, 'will make all men brothers, children of the same parent.' The spirit of the Laws of Moses is expressed in a single sentence: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor, as thyself;† and if ever he departed from this noble precept, it was the hardness of men's hearts, and the exigency of the times which compelled him. A display of the true Mosaic spirit is to be seen in the conduct of the children of Israel towards the captives they had taken of their enemies the men of Judah.

'And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria. But a prophet of the Lord was there, whose name was Oded; and he went out before the host that came to Samaria, and said unto them, Behold, because the Lord God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage

* David is thought to have barbarously mangled captured horses, 2 Sam. viii. 4, but a better translation of the verse is 'he destroyed all the chariots; ' this is the translation of the Septuagint. the same word occurs in Josh. xi. 9, and should be rendered destroyed.—*A. Clarke.*

† Levit. xix. 18.

that reacheth up unto heaven. And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bond-men and bond-women unto you: but are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God? Now hear me therefore, and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren; for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you. Then certain of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, and Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against them that came from the war, and said unto them, Ye shall not bring in the captives hither: for whereas we have offended against the Lord already, ye intend to add more to our sins and to our trespass; for our trespass is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel. So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the congregation. And the men which were expressed by name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm-trees, to their brethren: then they returned to Samaria.* Had this noble act of benevolence been done by an Alexander, or a Scipio, it had been lauded all over the world!

5. *The Law of the avenger of blood.*

One of the most striking of the institutions of Moses is that by which a private citizen was permitted to avenge the death of a relative who had been slain. Although it has no immediate connection with public

* 2 Chron. xxviii. 8—15.

war, it may be treated of under this head, since it was a *private* war which every individual could carry on at his own pleasure. The right to revenge the murder of one's relatives and friends arose naturally among a barbarous people, whose passions were fierce, and whose sense of honor was keen. Moses found this custom of taking vengeance already established among his countrymen, and unable to do it away entirely, he, so far modified and restricted the power of the avenger and increased the facilities for affording a regular judicial investigation of the affair, that the dangerous tendency of this custom was in a great measure counteracted. The custom which led to the law upon this subject was one of long standing and of extensive influence. There seems to be an allusion to it in Gen. xxvii. 41, when Rebecca laments that she might lose both of her sons in one day, for Esau intended to kill Jacob, and she probably supposed the avenger would slay him in return. She could not allude to punishment by the magistrate, for Isaac was the chief man in that region. Among the modern Arabians we find frequent mention of the custom. Mohammed allowed the murderer to pay the avenger a pecuniary fine and then go free.* The word *God*, which our translators have so well rendered *revenger of blood*, often means the *next of kin*, or the one who possessed the right of redemption of an estate or of a friend from slavery. The word is used by Moses in this sense before he speaks of kin or avenging the blood of his kinsman.†

* Coran chap. ii. See instances of this kind of revenge in Niebuhr's Travels in Arabia, p. 197. Burckhardt's Travels in Syria &c. p. 513—546.

† Levit. xxv. 28. Gen. xlvi. 16. Exod. vi. 6, &c.

Moses mentions him in the first statute against murder, and says a place shall be appointed for such as kill others accidentally, whither they may flee from the avenger.*

Moses appointed certain cities in various parts of the land, where a man could flee when he had committed a murder, either wilful or accidental; when he had entered the city the avenger had no legal right over him. There were three of these *cities of refuge* on each side of the Jordan, and, says Maimonides, all the forty-eight cities of the Levites were also cities of refuge, with this difference however from the six others—the cities of refuge were bound to furnish those who fled to them with subsistence while they remained in them, which was not exacted of the other forty-eight. The temple also was an asylum which enjoyed similar privileges. The cities were to be of easy access, and once a year it was the duty of the magistrates to inspect the roads that led to them, to keep them in good repair, and at the intersection of the roads, to set up guide posts, with **REFUGE**, **REFUGE**, written on them. If the avenger overtook him before he reached the city, he could kill him, and the murder was not an *actionable offence*.

When the murderer reached the city he was taken into the custody of the magistrates, and was tried first summarily by the officers of the city of refuge, and then by the magistrates of the place where the murder was committed. If found guilty of intentional murder, he was delivered up to justice and executed. If he was proved innocent, he remained within the limits of the

* *Exod. xxi. 10, 11.*

city, and its fields, until the death of the high-priest, when all right of the blood-avenger ceased. Previous to this the avenger might lawfully slay him if found without the walls of the city. Perhaps this exile in a foreign city was intended to punish the carelessness which had caused the death of a man. This law was the same for citizens and strangers.

The object of this law was to put an end to those family feuds so common and permanent in the East, particularly among the Arabians. The custom which led to it is opposite to the just and merciful spirit of the institutions of the great Hebrew lawgiver. But he was able only to modify, not to remove it.

The laws relating to the blood-avenger &c. are found in Numb. xxxv. 9—34. Deut. xix. 1—10.

(*To be continued.*)

THEO. PARKER.

[The following article was written by the late Rev. Mr Bailey of Deerfield. It was originally put into the hands of a clergyman who intended it for another purpose, but has now kindly committed it to us after making some necessary alterations. — EDS.]

BAPTISM.

Math. xxviii. 19. 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'

Acts xii. 5. 'When they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.'

Gal. iii. 27. 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.'

It has frequently been observed, that the expressions relating to Baptism both in the Acts and the Epistles do not literally accord with the directions given by our Savior immediately before his ascension. He there commanded his disciples to baptize their converts of all nations into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. But in no instance through the whole Gospel history do we find it recorded, that they actually adopted this form. The common expressions in the instances of baptism related are, that they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, or into Christ. It is easy to suppose that these expressions are all of equivalent import; and the supposition is probably correct. But there appears, on the other hand, some reason to suppose, that the Apostles did not consider the words of Christ as a prescribed form to be invariably used on occasions of

baptism. And if the several expressions already mentioned are equivalent, it must be immaterial as to the proper administration or validity of the ordinance, whether persons are baptized in the usual way, or more simply, as in the Acts, in the name of the Lord Jesus, or still more briefly, '*into Christ*.' So far as we can judge, either of these modes would be Scriptural; and of course Christians would have reason to be satisfied with either. We should regard the substance rather than the form; especially when the Scriptures have prescribed different forms.

Our Lord gave to his disciples a comprehensive form of prayer. It may well be considered as suitable on almost all occasions. But no Christian feels himself bound to be limited to these words in the exercises of devotion. It is enough if our prayers are consistent with this form, and with the other instructions of the sacred volume on this important duty. The same mode of reasoning is applicable to the form of words used in baptism. Any other words, which express a similar meaning, might unquestionably have been adopted without a violation of the command to baptize into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. What, then, is denoted by being baptized *into Christ*? In reply to this question, we may answer generally, that it denotes the mode of *introduction into his spiritual kingdom*. As the head of this kingdom, it belonged to Christ to prescribe some mode, by which men should become the subjects of his spiritual government. As the great Teacher of men, it was his prerogative to point out the manner in which they should become his disciples. The nature of water, as adapted to the purpose of cleansing various ob-

jects, and the common use which is made of it for this purpose, shows sufficiently the propriety of employing it as a sign or symbol of moral purity. And when we consider that this purity is the grand purpose, which the gospel is designed to effect, we perceive an exact correspondence between the sign and the thing signified.

As to the *quantity* of water, *little or great*, or as to the mode of applying it, sprinkling, affusion or the pouring of water upon the subject, or immersion more or less complete—these and the questions connected with them seem to me of very subordinate importance, inasmuch as the external corporeal cleansing forms no part of the design of the ordinance.

To be baptized, then, into Christ, signifies a belief, or rather the expression of a belief of his Gospel. It is a mode of proposing, or making known such belief in those, who present themselves, or their children, or those who are in any way the objects of their religious care for this sacred rite, to baptism. It is a solemn recognition of the truth of Christ's religion. It is an act expressive of the serious regard, the devout reverence, the confiding trust we entertain for him in his official as well as in his moral and spiritual character. It is a practical declaration of our confidence in him as the Messiah, or anointed Messenger of God; as the commissioned teacher of mankind; as the Savior of the world. It is the expression of faith in the instructions he imparted; of a belief in the obligation of his law; and of the authority of his doctrine. It is, of course, a declaration of faith in God our heavenly Father, an acknowledgment of his perfections, provi-

dence, and government, as these great truths are revealed to us by our Master. Still further, it denotes a belief of that sacred influence, or supernatural power, by which the gospel was established, by which miracles were performed, predictions were uttered, and the whole ministry of Christ and of his apostles was attested. This influence is called the Spirit—the Holy Spirit, and frequently in our version (using not happily an ancient English word, that has now lost its former signification) ‘*Holy Ghost*.’ In fine, it is plain that to be *baptized into Christ* is to be baptized into that religion, which the Father sent the Son to establish, by the influence of that miraculous power with which he was invested. No one probably will suppose that baptism as applied to persons capable of understanding ordinary instruction, implies a belief of less than has here been stated. If a person has not such a belief of the gospel, why should he wish to be baptized into Christ? Without such faith, what could this act be but a mere pretence?

Again, to be baptized into Christ signifies our desire of regarding him as our Instructor; of obeying his precepts and of imitating his example. If we are destitute of this desire, if we have no wish to become acquainted with the doctrines of Jesus, to live according to his commands, and to cherish the same mind that was in him, the state of our hearts is not in accordance, nay, it is absolutely opposed to the belief of his religion. If we believe it to be true, we must, to be consistent, admit it to be of great importance and obligation as a rule of life. We may be conscious of many imperfections, we may feel our moral weakness,

our virtue may sometimes prove inadequate to resist temptation, and yet we may be sincerely desirous of living, as the Gospel of God teaches us, a righteous and sober life, in the habitual exercise of love, gratitude and obedience to God, of justice, kindness and charity to men, and in the careful cultivation within our own hearts of purity, meekness and humility.—But, if a person has no desire to possess these moral excellencies, no wish to be conformed to the precepts of Christ; if he is willing to live always in the neglect of what the Gospel requires and in the indulgence of habits or dispositions which it forbids, with what consistency or sincerity can he wish to be baptized into Christ? Is it enough, that he has a mere speculative faith in the truth of Christianity? If Christianity has any value, it is as a practical system. It is valuable, not so much because it presents the clearest and noblest views of moral truth, but because these views are fitted to produce the best effects upon the character. It is not enough, that we are baptized into the belief of Christian doctrines; or that we are convinced of the truth of all that Christ taught; or even that we entertain the most correct views of all these subjects. All this is doubtless desirable, worthy of our pursuit, and in itself of the best tendency. But if we stop here, we come far short of the great purposes of the gospel. We must also be baptized into obedience to Christ; into the spirit of his religion, into the practice of the virtues which adorned his character, and without which all faith and profession and boasted experience are vain.

From these remarks it will be clearly seen that the

outward act of being baptized into Christ is very different from the inward act of believing his doctrine, of imbibing his spirit—and in general of obeying his commands. But the outward baptism is intended as the sign or representative or pledge of all these. Therefore it is, that the apostle says, ‘They that have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ; and, as it is added,—‘Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ:’ i. e. they have put on the profession of Christ. They have enrolled themselves among his disciples. They belong to his spiritual kingdom. They are members of his Church. They are introduced into that great society, of which he is the founder and head. If baptism has not this signification, what else does it imply? I have not been able to find that the New Testament points out any other mode of entering the Church of Christ. When any were converted by the preaching of the apostles to the faith of the gospel, and wished to become members of the Christian community, by what method were they received? Have we any account of articles of faith to be subscribed or assented to? Do the Acts of the Apostles record any instance of covenants or engagements entered into, or of formal declarations of any particular articles of faith, except the simple assertion of the faith, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? This indeed was demanded; and this simple declaration includes the grand peculiarity, the distinguishing doctrine of the gospel of Christ; which whoever professed was straitway admitted to the privilege of baptism.

Neither does it appear, that beyond this single inquiry as to their *faith in Christ*, the apostles were

accustomed to examine those who desired Baptism. One simple question was asked, Dost thou believe that Jesus is the Christ? If this was answered in the affirmative, the whole condition was fulfilled, and strait-way the convert was baptized.

Neither does it appear, that those who were already members of the Christian Church exercise the power of excluding others who might wish to join them. Is there any instance on record, showing that persons might be rejected on the ground of not having a correct belief, or not having experienced what in these modern days has been called a saving change? On the other hand, the simple rule seems to have been to receive all by baptism, who, believing that Jesus was the Christ, wished for admission to the church; not because they were already acquainted with, or that they received the whole truth—for of much that pertained to the gospel, even to its essential truths, they were necessarily ignorant; not because they had been regularly carried through a certain process of conviction and conversion—(which terms, as now frequently employed, include distressing apprehensions of divine wrath, a sense of utter inability, an entire opposition to the gospel, a release, if not miraculous yet involuntary from this state, then instantly following an extreme of joy,)—for there are many cases in which nothing like this is intimated, many in which from the previous condition of the convert there was no time or opportunity for such varied exercises; in which there was merely the sober conviction of the truth, and a calm desire to become members of the Christian community, by baptism.—They were admitted, also, without any trial of

the reality of their conversion, without waiting to see what would be the fruits of the faith they professed. The intimation of their belief in Jesus, as the Messiah—and I repeat this because it is the essential point to be regarded in this matter—connected with the expression of their wish to be admitted by baptism among the followers of Christ, seems to have been immediately and universally regarded as the only condition.

If now we are to consider the practice of the apostles as a right rule of judging, how cautiously should we guard against multiplying conditions, and thus throwing obstacles to the participation of a Christian privilege, which by the authority of the Master and the practice of his apostles was so freely and largely bestowed.

But it is to be remarked yet further, that they who have been baptized into Christ, have *put on the spirit of Christ*. This proposition may possibly require some explanation, before it will command an assent. But if a person really possesses what his baptism denotes, if he is the subject of that moral purity which it represents, he has already the spirit of Christ. If one who has been baptized exhibits, notwithstanding, a temper at variance with the gospel, if he is proud, revengeful, unjust and cruel, if he wants the pure and benevolent spirit demanded by his faith, it may well be said, that such a one has not been baptized *into Christ*. His baptism has not brought him into moral union with the Savior. Though he may not need the literal application of water, he stands in the greatest need of the inward purification. He wants to be imbued with the spirit of holiness. For baptism, declares the apos-

tle, is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God. They who have not received, or as the expression of the apostle is, 'put on' the spirit of Christ, can be said to have received baptism only as an outward ceremony. Its whole meaning and intent are lost in respect to them; for it scarcely deserves the name of a Christian institution, except as an outward expression of that faith and holiness, which Christianity always supposes in its believers.

On the other hand, those who have put on the spirit of Christ, who cherish the piety, the meekness, the purity and charity, which appeared in his life—though they should never have received the baptism of water; though from circumstances over which possibly they had no control, the outward form were wanting—might still truly be said to 'be baptized into Christ,' for they have drank into his spirit, though they may not outwardly have been enrolled among his disciples.

If we have seemed in these remarks to have reference only to those who have been baptized at an adult age, when they could understand and feel its obligations for themselves, let it not be forgotten by those who were baptized in their infancy, before they could understand for themselves the nature or obligation of the rite, that they hold a near and sacred relation to the Christian family; that by their parents or their friends they have been numbered with the disciples of Christ; and that they are bound by this obligation to submit themselves to his law, and to be followers of God as dear children.—That they were introduced into the Christian church at a time when they could know

nothing of the transaction, is no reason why they should want the piety, the humility, or the charity, which the gospel inculcates. As well might those who are born under a government of equal laws and rights, refuse to obey those laws, or to avail themselves of those rights, on the ground that they had no voice in establishing them, or in settling the question, under what form of government they should pass their childish or youthful years.

Finally, they who have been baptized into Christ, have *put on the character of Christ*. By this as distinguished from the spirit of Christ, we mean the outward virtues, the exterior graces, which every disciple of Christ is called to exhibit; the duties they are called to practice, of the fulfillment of which the life of Christ Jesus presented the perfect example.

Yes, let us imitate that example; and if we do indeed imbibe the mind of Christ, practise the virtues which he practised, and submit ourselves to be governed by his spirit and temper, then, to adopt the words of another, ' how wise and how good, how placid and contented shall we be! How easy then will it be for us to fulfill our duty, to gain the mastery over ourselves, and to soothe our spirits both in life and in death! With what delight and energy of soul shall we then be inspired! What peace shall reign in our breasts! What order and harmony in all our sentiments and affections, and in all the parts of our conduct! How gladly shall we then turn our thoughts to God! How benevolent and forgiving, how compassionate shall we be to our brethren! How peacefully shall we think on futurity! how calmly shall we contemplate our end!'

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

The Epistle to the Romans forms a very important and interesting part of the contents of the Sacred Volume. There is no portion of the Scriptures from which have been drawn the weapons of a warmer contest among Christians than from this. From the earliest ages of the Church this production of the great Apostle to the Gentiles has created the most destructive divisions and controversies among the professed followers of the same Master. Designed to heal the differences between Jew and Gentile, it was written to explain the doctrine of Justification. That doctrine in some sense it does most certainly teach, but whether it be the same as that which Luther made the article of a prosperous or of a ruined Church remains to be determined. The supposed difficulties of the Epistle have made it a great favorite with the pens of systematic theologians and the authors of those venerable specimens of mixed architecture called bodies of divinity. But no two writers have agreed in their interpretations. St. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Arminius, Grotius, Turretin, Locke, Belsham, Taylor, Flatt, Tholuck and Stuart have expounded it in turn, and it still offers an inexhaustible armory of argument. Certainly the august array of names of which those just mentioned are but a small part, would tend to impress a proper spirit of diffidence upon one who presumes to write upon it, even if the document itself did not appear to him somewhat hard to be understood. However, as it may be disputed whether any one can bet-

ter perform a voluntary task by a previous aggravation of its difficulties, let us not anticipate them but wait with patience and perseverance till they present themselves.

In order that we may have a clear understanding of the object of this Epistle we must know something of the circumstances of those to whom it was addressed.

Under the Roman government the principles of religious toleration were allowed their fullest exercise. Citations might be made from a great number of Latin authors to illustrate the great anxiety which prevailed among the rulers and the people to allow to all the privileges of thinking and worshipping as they would. Livy tells us that when the Romans had disfranchised the people of Anagnia in the south of Italy for disobedience, they deprived their magistrates of all power except that which was necessary for the administration of religion. Cicero brought it as a heavy charge against Verres that when Praetor of the province of Syracuse he had obstructed the people in their annual choice of a priest to Jupiter. Rites however absurd, however opposed to those of the city, were held sacred there and throughout the provinces. Even the Egyptian ceremonies which appeared so childish and ridiculous to all strangers were not interfered with until Augustus and Tiberius were forced to restrain them on account of their licentiousness. Ever since the conquests of Alexander the Jews had been protected by him and his immediate successors. When Judea was subjugated by Pompey about 63 years before Christ many Jews were carried to Rome as slaves. But they persevered in the observance of their religious rites,

and it would appear that the inconvenience thus caused to their masters led to their liberation. They were permitted to establish themselves in a small town upon the Tiber opposite to the city. The spirit of enterprise and trade for which they have ever been so distinguished had undoubtedly elevated some of them to a high rank. We know from the mention which Ovid and Juvenal as well as Josephus make of the fact, that their assemblies were frequented by fashionable and well born Romans. Such was the state of things at the time of the Savior's death. And now we come to the first planting of the Gospel in the metropolis of the world.

We have no satisfactory information either of the time when or of the person by whom the Gospel was first preached at Rome. We are certain that it was not introduced by Peter or Paul, as the latter implies in his Epistle that when he wrote it, the converts there had as yet received no spiritual gifts (i. 11.) There is a tradition much relied upon by the Romish Church that Peter was the first apostle here, and that he visited the city about A. D. 43. This rests upon an inference from Eusebius and a statement of Jerome, but neither are of weight, and both have been questioned by eminent Catholic writers. No one who reads the Epistle can suppose that Paul would write in the manner he has done, and especially that he would omit all mention of Peter, if the converts had enjoyed the instruction of the latter. Still Protestant writers have undoubtedly gone too far in asserting that Peter never was at Rome, as very credible tradition fixes the martyrdom of the two apostles in that city.

Yet here the Gospel was planted and in a comparatively flourishing state when this Epistle was written. Paul speaks of the faith of the converts as known and honored abroad (i. 8: xvi. 19.) Moreover the numerous salutations at the end are addressed to individuals who while they were esteemed in the Church seem to have been well known to the apostle. Most probably they were acquaintances and converts which he had made in Greece and Asia. As has been already said, many Jews resided in Rome; many likewise made periodical visits here for purposes of trade &c. Amid the vast concourse of men from different nations who were present on the memorable day of Pentecost, the Romans were conspicuous. When they returned home they would carry with them a more or less vivid impression of the faith thus preached to them, as they might have been excited to grant it a more willing hearing. In that vast city were collected together multitudes of every name and nation and religion and character. There were the refined nobles of senatorial rank, the proud patricians, the thriving plebeians, the brutal soldiery, and the uncivilized slave. Citizens and foreigners, philosophers and historians, poets and artists, the followers of Plato and of Aristotle, Stoicks and Epicureans, all were waiting as earnestly as the Athenians, for something new, and yet their state of mind was not so much a preparation for truth, as an indolent lassitude occasioned by a cloyed and surfeited indulgence of their various fancies. It was in the midst of this unnumbered and multiform throng that the invisible leaven of Christianity was to work its way. What a mighty mass was it to influence! How visible is the

providence of God in the mode which was adopted to ensure its success? Any other method than that slow and unseen operation by which the Gospel was first rooted here would have been baffled in its commencement. If arms had been put into the hands of the small band of disciples what would they have effected? A scuffle in the street or on the area of a heathen temple, a guard of soldiery, a damp dungeon and a bloody execution would have crushed them forever. Had they come with winning words of eloquence, or the enticing lures of the imagination to the luxurious nobles, they might perhaps have been spurned or they might have been feasted, but they never would have regenerated a single soul. Had they announced their pretence in the city and appointed a public assembly where they would tell their strange story, how would a mixed multitude have scoffed at its wonders, and have effectually deterred the more serious from listening to it by jest and ridicule. But it was not by power or wit or eloquence or splendor that Christianity first gained a hearing in Rome. All those who would have been influenced by such causes knew not of its approach or its presence. Some single unnoticed individual, a centurion, a soldier, a publican, or it may be a slave, had heard its first teacher or beheld its miracles or conversed with its first disciples, and as he passed unheeded through the splendid streets of the city he made known to those in whose confidence he might trust, that the life and lessons of Jesus of Nazareth would be the theme of midnight converse. They met in some retired spot, in their own private houses if they dared to do so, but more frequently in some dilapidated sepul-

chre among the dwellings of the dead. Often did the little band of disciples listen to the words of heavenly wisdom, in the dark hours of the night, with voices scarce raised above a whisper, and momentarily in expectation of surprise. Yet there was nothing of subterfuge or cowardice in their conduct. From the first moment that the truth had touched their hearts, those hearts were given to God and to the Savior, and no earthly force could avail to separate them. But it was not always nor long to be thus. Converts were soon made from among those who needed neither knowledge nor wealth nor influence. There must have been many thinking men in the city who could not shut their eyes to the beauty and perfection of Christian morality. They had listened to the teachings of the philosophers and found them to be worthless and impracticable; they longed for some satisfying knowledge, and when Christianity offered itself to them they were prepared to receive it. Yet the most superficial reflection will disclose to us the mass of prejudice which was to be overcome, and the consequently very imperfect views which the most prepared minds would at first entertain of it. The names of many of the early converts are given in this Epistle, and we have reason to suppose that some of them were persons of distinction. A mention is made in Acts xviii. of Paul's meeting at Corinth with Aquila and Priscilla who had left Rome in consequence of a decree of Claudius by which all Jews had been banished from the city. This decree has been supposed to have arisen from the persecutions and disturbances excited by the Jews against the Christians. It was issued about A. D. 50, and lasted three years.

Aquila and Priscilla accompanied Paul to Ephesus, and when this Epistle was written they had returned to Rome (xvi. 3). Aristobulus and Narcissus (xvi. 10, 11) are supposed to have been persons of distinction. Epaphras or Epaphroditus, whom Paul so often mentions with esteem and affection, is believed to have been the celebrated freedman of Nero. When Paul wrote his Epistles during his imprisonment at Rome he spoke of the saints in Cæsar's own household. An-dronicus and Junia (xvi. 7) were 'of note among the apostles.' They were converts before Paul, his relatives and fellow prisoners. Rufus (xvi. 3) was a distinguished Christian. His mother had shown great kindness to Paul, and it has been supposed that he was the same individual mentioned in Mark xv. 21, as one of the sons of Simon of Cyrene who bore the cross of Jesus.

It was in this city that the early Christians suffered some of the severest persecutions from the hands of the Gentiles. Notwithstanding all that we have said of religious toleration at Rome is strictly true, the peculiarities of the Christian faith were so marked that it stood upon an entirely different footing from all other religions. It had no one principle of affinity with any of the multiform creeds and modes of worship then prevalent. We know that the early Christians were stigmatized, yes, and put to the severest torture and deaths on the sole charge of Atheism. This indeed appears very singular to us when we call to mind the lofty views of the one Supreme Being which Jesus promulgated, and the spiritual worship which he required. But we must remember that Christianity had no shrines

nor temples nor idols. These were the only realities of Pagan worship. It would be wrong to affirm as some have done, that the statues were adored, but all know that they were considered a necessary medium of worship. Thus when the Christians cast out the images which formerly had stood upon their hearths and tore down the consecrated idols of their fathers, the charge seemed a specious one that they had no Gods. Again, Christianity threw not only contempt but abhorrence upon the heathen priesthood, and this was composed of men of the highest rank. We learn from Justin Martyr and other Fathers, that the Jews had sent persons into all parts of the earth to denounce the Christians as heretical and impious. Their Rabbins pronounced curses against them in the synagogues and solemnly charged the people to hold no intercourse with them, particularly to listen to no exposition or defence of their opinions. Add to this the many minute and inappreciable, but none the less influential, details of private life, of society, of friendly intercourse, of companionship in the games and other amusements, the forum, the arena, &c. From all these scenes the Christians kept themselves as from pollution. They could not pledge a bargain by adjuring Hercules. They could not join a festive circle where praises were sung in honor of those whom they looked upon as demons. They could not grasp the hand of a friend whose tongue invoked upon them a blessing from an imagined spirit in league with the powers of darkness, nor would they dare to look upon the gladiatorial scenes where human blood was wantonly mingled with the gore of savage beasts. From

all friendship save that of those who enjoyed a like precious faith with themselves, and from all assemblies save that of the sacramental union of the followers of the Nazarene, they must keep themselves aloof. Yet their presence was missed. None knew the reason why here and there should be met a solitary individual passing by the road with thoughts far removed from the scene. Their eyes were turned inwardly, and they seemed to lower upon an innocent joy. Their meditations were warmed by a different spirit than that of earthly pleasure, and therefore they appeared to frown upon those gross allurements which the anxiety of the Emperors so profusely provided for a turbulent populace.

All these circumstances combined could not have failed to have an influence in rendering the Christians, at first despised, to be subsequently suspected, hated and persecuted. It appears from some casual records of these times that they were not looked upon as a new and independent sect, but rather as some Jewish schismatics. Christianity had to bear not only its own reproach, but that even which was in a measure justly the due of those despised ritualists who were thus accidentally associated with it ; and when we take this circumstance into view, we shall see abundant reason for the fierce trial which the disciples of Jesus were soon to suffer. Tacitus (Annal xv. 44) after giving a description of a terrible fire which occurred in Rome about A. D. 64, states that the Emperor Nero was, by common rumor, charged as its author. In order to free himself, says the historian—

'Nero procured others to be accused, and inflicted exquisite punishments upon those people who were held in abhorrence for their crimes, and were commonly known by the name of Christians—Some were covered over with the skins of wild beasts and torn to pieces by dogs; some were crucified; and others, having been daubed over with combustible materials, were set up as lights in the night time and thus burnt to death.' This passage is, or should be, familiar to all Christians. Let it be remembered that it is the testimony of a heathen who knew nothing but this of our faith, and that it bears witness to the unconquerable steadfastness and the bitter pangs of its disciples. I have gone into these details of the early planting, profession and history of Christianity at Rome, in order that the reader may have before his mind some vivid impression of the situation of those to whom the Epistle to the Romans was addressed.

Respecting its author there never was a doubt raised against the general consent which ascribes it to Paul. It ostensibly bears his name, and it is so pervaded with his spirit that it cannot be mistaken. He had early in his Apostleship expressed his intention to preach the Gospel at Rome, but his plans had been frustrated or altered, and as he was not willing to leave the converts so long without a word of encouragement he writes this. The plainness which characterizes it shows that there existed a certain familiarity between him and those whom he addressed. A similar inference explains the fact of his knowledge of the disputes which prevailed among them. The authenticity

of the last chapters as the production of Paul has of late years been called into question, but the arguments offered against it are of very little weight.

The Epistle was undoubtedly written from Cenchrea the sea port of Corinth. Paul recommends Phebe, a deaconess of the Church at this place, to the kindness of the Roman converts (xvi. 1) and she probably carried the letter. Gaius, likewise is mentioned in the Epistle (xvi. 23) as the host of Paul, and he was baptized by the Apostle at Corinth (1 Cor. i. 14). Erastus is mentioned as 'the chamberlain of the city' (xvi. 23) and he was a resident at Corinth (2 Tim. iv. 20).

The date of the Epistle is very satisfactorily settled by internal particulars. It was written after Paul had arrived at Corinth and was about to depart to Jerusalem to carry to some suffering converts there, the bounty of the Churches in Macedonia and Achaia (xv. 25, 26). Acts xix. 21, compared with xx. 1—4, relates the same particulars and fixes the date of the Epistle at the close of A. D. 57 or in the spring of A. D. 58. This was soon after the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

GEO. E. ELLIS.

ON THE Gnostic PHILOSOPHY, AND ALLUSIONS TO IT IN
THE NEW TESTAMENT.

From whatever point of view we contemplate the doctrine of the Gnostics, it appears highly important and interesting. If we are merely loiterers at the foot of the tree of knowledge, and curious to taste of all its fruit; if we are philosophers, desirous of observing all the forms in which Truth has arrayed herself; or historians, who would chronicle all the steps of human civilization from the first starting-point to the present time—Gnosticism must attract our attention from the strange beauty of its doctrines, the loftiness of its pretensions, and the important part it once played on the broad stage of human advancement.

The Christian scholar, who is fully penetrated with the catholic principles of his master, finds a delight in studying even the wildest vagaries of human reason, while she has been searching after the truth. He knows that truth is ever more congenial to the human mind than falsehood, and is therefore willing to find it under every variety of form, even in doctrines the most opposite. ‘No system of Philosophy, or Religion,’ says a celebrated man, ‘ever prevailed without some truth, which alone gave it prevalence and efficiency.’ This consideration should lead us carefully to examine the doctrine in question, before we decide upon its high speculations and lofty pretensions.

The narrow limits of the present occasion allow but a few words upon each of the topics suggested by the broad and copious question.

The doctrines of Gnosticism, their origin, and allusions to them in the New Testament, will form the grand divisions of the subject, and if but a few words are bestowed upon each, the occasion and not the subject is at fault.

I. *The doctrines of Gnosticism.*

Gnosticism had for its object to account for the world *without*, and the world *within*; to tell the *cause* and *purpose* of each; to explain why soul and body are united, and how they cohere; to set forth the origin of evil, its consequences, its uses, and its remedies, and to give a more full and complete developement of the religious sentiment in man.

Hence it will be seen that the Gnostics labored at the same great problems which have employed the sages of all nations, and of every age, and which it is 'the last infirmity of noble mind,' not to despair of solving.

The grand questions of the eternity, or the createdness of matter, the origin, utility and final extinction of evil; of the relations between the natural and spiritual world, between God and man, upon the creation, fall, and regeneration of the human family, and all those questions so long and so fruitlessly labored upon by other sages, were but childs-play for the Gnostic. Under the shadow of his doctrine, he pretended to afford rest from every care, and refuge from all doubt, at a time, too, when the Ionian sages could not distinguish *reason* from *matter*, while the Peripatetics placed the essence of thought in motion, and the Italian philosophers could only 'explain the relation between God

and the world by musical notes, ciphers, and doubts.*

The Gnostics were divided into various sects, only one of which, however, assumed the name, though their opponents classed them all in the same category. The main doctrines of the Gnostics were as follows, though only a meagre sketch can be presented on so narrow a canvass.†

The Supreme Deity—whom they variously call the *One*, the *Existing*, the *Depth*, the *Infinite*, and the *Beautiful*—dwells in a fulness—called a *Pleroma*—of light and glory, and is the source of all *good*; matter is, like him, eternal, but is rude and chaotic, and the source of all *evil*.

Before the world was formed, or Time had begun, certain beings called *Eons*, had emanated from the Supreme Divinity, and surrounded his invisible presence, filling up the *Pleroma* of his glory. They were the formers of all things, worlds, animals, and of men.

The number and office of these *Eons* were different according to the story of various teachers. Valentinus composed the most complete system and enumerated thirty *Eons*,—fifteen male and fifteen female—who

* See Matter, *Historie Critique du Gnosticisme*, vol. 1, p. 24 and p. 239.

† Neander, in his 'Gnostische Entwicklung der Vornehmesten Gnostische systeme' makes the following classification of sects and teachers of Gnosticism.

1. *Judaizing Gnostics*. Basilides and his school; Valentinus and his school, consisting of Heracleon, Ptolemaeus, Marcus, Theodotus, Bardesanes.

2. *Anti-Jewish Gnostics*. The Ophites, Saturninus, Marcion, and his school; Arpelles, and their followers.

3. *Small Eclectic Sects*. Simon Magus, Carpocrates, Epiphanes.

were separated into three classes according to their dignity and descent.*

1. The first class, called the *Ogdoad*, consisted of eight Eons, viz. the Supreme Deity, (*Bythos*, the Depth), and his partner, (*Ennoia*, Thought, sometimes called Grace, Silence and the Unspeakable), with their descendants, viz. Intelligence (*Nous*, called also the Only Begotten), and Truth his wife, (*Aletheia*). The Word, (*Logos*), and the Life, (*Zoe*), Man, (*Anthropos*), and the Church, (*Ecclesia*).

2. The second class consisted of ten Eons, who were the descendants of *Logos* and *Zoe*, of the Word and Life, viz.; the Deep and Mixture, (*Bythios* and *Mixis*), the Undecaying and Union, (*Ageratos* and *Henosis*), the Self-subsisting and Pleasure, (*Autophyes* and *Hedone*), the Unmoved and Moderation, (*Akinetos* and *Syncrasis*). The Only-begotten and Felicity, (*Monogenes* and *Makaria*).

3. The third class consisted of twelve Eons, the offspring of man and the church, (*Anthropos* and *Ecclesia*).

* Valentinus was of Jewish descent, though he was educated in the Christian faith, and lived at Alexandria. He was skilled in the oriental, as well as in the Grecian Philosophy, and seems indebted to Basilides for some of his opinions. His works are now lost except a few fragments preserved in the writings of the Christian Fathers. (e. g. Clemens, Alex : Strom : p. 509. 575. 635. Origen opp. Tom. 1, p. 72, 98, 165, 411, 624, 658. Ed. de la Rue.) He pretended to have received the *secret doctrine* of Christ and his apostles. He was the first who made a *complete system* of Eons.

The whole tribe of Eons was doubtless intended to represent the various manifestations of the Almighty. They were images of the *Invisible*, names of the *Ineffable*. In the division of these Beings into three classes, there is evidently an allusion to the three classes of spiritual existences recognised by the Persians. See Hyde Rel : vet : Persarum. Compare also the Theogony of Hesiod, and the Cosmogonies of Sanchoniathon, Plato and Philo.

They were the Comforter and Faith, (*Parakletos* and *Pistis*); the Paternal and Hope, (*Patrikos* and *Elpis*); the Metrical and Love, (*Metrikos* and *Agapa*); the Perennial and Prudence, (*Aennaos* and *Synesis*); the Ecclesiastical and the Blessed, (*Ecclesiasticos* and *Makariotes*); the Voluntary and Wisdom, (*Theletos* and *Sophia*).

Thus the first class comprised the immediate emanations of the Supreme Being; the second, the descendants of the Logos, and the third those of the Eon, man.

Besides these thirty, there were four other Eons, of peculiar powers, appointed to especial duties. *Horus*, (a limit,) 'kept watch and ward,' on the borders of the *Pleroma*, lest any one of the Eons should unluckily stray out into *Chaos* and perish. There was also **CHRIST**, the **HOLY SPIRIT**, and **JESUS**, who was endowed with all possible gifts, and surrounded by a host of angels.*

The office of Christ was to instruct the Eons, that they could never find out the nature and essence of the Supreme, while the Holy Spirit taught them to calm the unruly passions of their souls.

Wisdom, the youngest of all the Eons, desired to understand the nature of God; and because she was unable to effect her purpose, she was thrown into a violent commotion, and her daughter, *Knowledge*, was cast out into *Chaos*, where she became the mother of *Demiurgos*, the world-maker.† From the eternal mat-

* Moshemii *commentatio de rebus Anti Constant.* cent. II. cap. liii—lvii. Matter *ut supra*, vol. 2 p. 101—156. Neander *ut supra*, S. 92—143. Beausobre *Hist. crit. du Mani &c.* vol. 1, p. 548—588. Moshemii *diss. in H. E. pertinentes*, vol. 1, p. 157—227, vol. 2, p. 75—100. Brucker *Hist. crit. Philosophiae*, vol. 2, p. 641—sqq.

† 'As an allegory this recital has great beauty, and truth. Intelligence which would know more than its actual condition permits,

ter which had been operated upon by the smiles, the tears, and the anxieties of his mother, Demiurgos formed the world. Man was made of the material and animal natures, and *Knowledge*,—without the consent of *Demiurgos*—added the *spiritual soul*, which can never die.

The *Demiurgos* forgot his createdness, and pretended to be the Supreme God. He was the Jehovah of the Jews, who gradually estranged men from the knowledge of the true God, and subjected them to his grievous tyranny. To rescue man from his forlorn condition, the Deity sent Christ from the *Pleroma* of his glory. He was born as the Evangelists relate, and at his baptism, the nobler *Eon Jesus*, descended upon him in the ‘form of a dove.’ The *Demiurgos* was enraged at the success of his preaching, and caused him to be crucified; but before he suffered death, his *superior nature* and *spiritual soul*,—i. e. the *Eons*, Christ and Jesus—fled back to the *Pleroma*, leaving only the material body and animal soul to bear the ‘shame of the cross.’*

Such souls as obey the directions of Christ, at the death of their bodies, will be brought to the region of light, near the *Pleroma*, and enjoy unbounded blessedness, while all others will be destroyed.† There all

runs astray, consumes and destroys itself, especially when Reason attempts to isolate herself from Will. The Valentinian Sophia (wisdom) is a beautiful type of the religious soul which aspires to the knowledge of God, and to divine felicity. Besides speculation, a Will and a Limit (Theletoς and Horus) are necessary. Without these two companions she is lost.’ Matter ut supra vol. 2, p. 128.

* All the Gnostics made a distinction between the *animal* and *rational* souls. Valentinus makes three classes both of *things* and persons. viz 1. The spiritual (Pneumatic). 2. The Material (Hylic). 3. The Sensitive (Psychic).

† Neander ut supra S. 140 sqq.

celestial souls will be reunited with God; Knowledge will enter the *Pleroma*, *Demiurgos* and all the sensitive souls will joyfully take up their abode in the vicinity of it; the latent fire will spring forth from the bosom of the earth, and consume all matter; then shall things be consummated, and the complete harmony of the universe be restored.*

II. *Origin of the Gnostics.*

It must be confessed that much obscurity hangs over the history of the origin and developement of Gnosticism; we know it but imperfectly, and through the means of its enemies.

It has been contended by some that no traces of this system could be found before the beginning of the second century after Christ,† while others maintain that the sect was flourishing in the time of the apostles.

The truth probably shuns either extreme. There were, perhaps, no Gnostic schools, and well defined sects before the year 120 A. C. But the rapid spread of this doctrine, its simultaneous appearance in many and distant places, and the general agreement in the main features of the system, show that the elements of Gnosticism had long existed, and been widely diffused.‡ Indeed, many of the distinguishing tenets of the

* Irenæus, and other ancients have handed down to us accounts of the crimes and depravity of the Valentinians. They are said to have held all actions equally lawful to *them*, and to have violated every law divine and human. But such statements are to be received with many limitations, for every one knows how dark a die the eye of an opponent sees on all the actions of his enemy. There is nothing in the doctrine of Valentinus which encourages iniquity; on the contrary, his whole system leads to virtue.

† See C. C. Tittman de vestigiis Gnosticorum in N. T. frustra quæsita. (8. Lipsiæ 1773.)

‡ Plato and even Pythagoras gave to the word *Gnosis* an unusual sense, viz. ‘*the study of the infinite.*’ This *Gnosis* con-

Gnostics are found in Philo, who had drunk of all the various streams of philosophy, which fell together at Alexandria.* In the ancient doctrines of the Jews, and the Persians, and of Zoroaster, do we find the scattered elements of Gnosticism, which required only

stituted their secret doctrine. There are many remarkable coincidences between the doctrines of Plato and those of the Gnostics. The *Ideas* of the one agree well with the *Eons* of the other. They agreed in teaching the emanation of spirits from the *ever-existing*; and in the attributes they ascribe to him. Both teach the suffering condition of the celestial souls, when separated from the Deity and confined in matter; the existence of spirits that surround the *Ineffable*, and the desire of the virtuous soul to return to its original source, 'the bosom of the Father.' (See the *Timæus* passim). The Gnostics however thought that Plato did not go to the bottom of profound questions. See *Porphyrii vita Plotini*.

* There were two classes of Philosophers among the Jews before the time of Jesus Christ, viz. the *Materialists* and the *Idealists*. Philo occupied a sort of middle ground, from which he attacked both parties. He made the Gnostic and Platonic distinction between the supreme Deity and the creator,—between the *existing*, and the manifested, (*To on*, and *To Phainomenon*). The oriental Philosophy contemplates the entire spirit-world, as a continually individualising developement of divine powers: every spirit is, therefore, so far a power of God, a revelation, an indication of God. The different classes of the spirit-world proceed from their different relations to this or that divine power, which they are appointed to reveal and to represent in action. Philo says God has with him, innumerable sanatory, helping and correcting beings, by which the world of Ideas was created, which was made as the type of the *visible* world—out of *unseen Ideas*, as the latter was made out of *sensible bodies*. The whole crowd of angels is divided into regular classes, and God makes use of them to complete his works, which it would not be consistent with his dignity to effect immediately by himself. The *Logos* is the mother-city of these powers, and is sometimes spoken of as 'a place which God himself has entirely filled with bodiless powers of all things.' (de Som: p. 574). Neander ut supra, S. 11.

Sometimes Philo speaks of the *Logos* as the *name* of God; as a single power, e. g. *Reason*; or as embracing all other powers, in which case it is a personified attribute. It is the beginning, the Ideal of the highest contemplation. The *Logos* is the 'image of God,' while man is but an 'image of the *Logos*,' &c. &c. Men who know God by intuition are the 'Sons of God.' Such as know him only through nature, or revelation, are the sons of the *Logos*.

a master's hand to unite into a lofty system of philosophy. At the time of the Babylonish captivity, the doctrines of Zoroaster, and other wise men of the East, were united with the scanty elements of Jewish philosophy, and produced the Cabala. This, in its turn, mingled with the doctrines of Pythagoras, Plato, and other western philosophers, and Gnosticism was the result. Like other systems of eclectic philosophy, it is to be traced to a thousand different sources, which have been pouring forth their treasures ever since man began to doubt, to examine, to conjecture, and to reason.

The early Gnostics made use of the Old Testament, though they did not adhere to it with implicit faith; while most of the moderns were Christians, though they were always looked upon as dangerous heretics. Some of them however were not Christians; e. g. Simon Magus seems to have been a conscientious fanatic, and not a Christian.

We are not to suppose their number was small, or that they counted only the superstitious, the ignorant, and the fanatic; on the contrary, they were formidable for their numbers, their learning, and their genius. The subtlety of their discussions, the loftiness of their claims, and the confidence of their most ungrounded assertions, secured many in their ranks, who had been allured thither by the strange beauty of the doctrine.

THEO. PARKER.

(*To be continued.*)

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